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CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FIFTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 24 December 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On Friday, 19 December 1997, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, stated that the Occupied West Bank is "part of Israel proper". This is an extremely dangerous and illegal claim, which in fact destroys the crux of the current Middle East peace process and the mutual recognition between the Israeli and Palestinian sides. Further statements made by aides to the Prime Minister in an attempt to ameliorate the repercussions and to back-pedal from this outrageous position did not succeed in quelling the serious impact of such a statement.

Yesterday, 23 December 1997, while on a tour in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and accompanied by some of his Ministers, Mr. Netanyahu declared that "we will, of course, never return to the former situation", referring to a return to the armistice lines, which mark the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This statement is yet another gross violation of the terms of the peace process, the aim of which is the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

Such statements, which reflect the policies of the present Israeli Government, require the most serious and concerted response by the international

community in order to bring an end to such policies and to save the Middle East peace process. For the United Nations family, such declarations provide additional justification to the serious concerns expressed by the Arab Group during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly in connection with the consideration of the report of the Credentials Committee with regard to Israeli credentials. The statements make it more imperative for the General Assembly to take the necessary actions in the future to ensure that the participation of Israel in the work of the General Assembly is consistent with international legitimacy, including international law, provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 3 (b), 36, 37 and 87 of the fifty-second session, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations